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FM AMEMBASSY TIRANA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4285
INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 2909
RUEHBW/AMEMBASSY BELGRADE 2706
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 0670
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 5262
RUEHVJ/AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO 0423
RUEHSQ/AMEMBASSY SKOPJE 4100
RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA 2768
RUEHVB/AMEMBASSY ZAGREB 2927
RUEPGBA/CDR USEUCOM INTEL VAIHINGEN GE
RHMFISS/CDR USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
RHDLCNE/COMUSNAVEUR LONDON UK
RUFNPKB/COMUSNAVEUR POLAD NAPLES IT
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0893
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 3261
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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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DEPT FOR EUR/SCE (MBENEDICT)
NSC FOR BRAUN

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [PHUM](#) [AL](#)

SUBJECT: VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM: OBELISK BUT NO ACCESS TO
STATE ARCHIVES

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PLEASE HANDLE ACCORDINGLY.

1.(SBU) The first-ever National Convention of the Victims of Communism held May 12 in Tirana. Organized by the Albanian Pan-National Association for the Integration of Political Prisoners and Persecuted Persons (the "Association"), the emotionally-charged event was frequently interrupted by outbursts from the audience. Security officials escorted a handful of attendees from the hall for refusing to be silenced. PM Berisha was enthusiastically greeted as a hero with cries of "Sali, Sali, Sali." Calling the regime of dictator Enver Hoxha "the most barbaric the Albanian nation has ever experienced," Berisha made three promises: to construct an obelisk in central Tirana to the memory of the victims of Communism, to declare all those who lost their lives at the hands of the Communists "Martyrs of Freedom," and to pay full compensation in accordance with the law. He also indicated his government's intention to make an important material contribution to the Museum of Victims of the Crimes of Communism under construction in Washington, D.C. The PM was notably silent on the issue of opening of state archives.

12. (SBU) In his remarks, Besim Ndregjoni, the SecGen of the Association, called on the government to implement the Council of Europe resolution, create a national commission for compiling records of the crimes of Communism, find the remains of all those executed by the Communists, declare a national day of remembrance, establish a national museum dedicated to the crimes of the Communist regime, pay full compensation to the victims, re-edit school textbooks for an accurate portrayal of that period in Albanian history, and for the Albanian Parliament to not remain silent and to issue

a declaration regarding the crimes of Communism, in general, and Enver Hoxha, in particular. Following the convention Ndregjoni told Embassy officials his organization has repeatedly called on current and past governments to open up state archives--a request which has fallen on deaf ears. Many of the protesters, including one woman who made it on stage and was allowed to speak for several minutes before being stopped, made adamant pleas for opening the archives so the perpetrators of the crimes of Communism could be identified and brought to justice before it is too late (i.e., before they pass away).

¶3. (SBU) Finnish Ambassador to Albania, Alpi Rusi, speaking on behalf of all Scandinavian ambassadors accredited to Albania, called on Albania to re-write its history based on data and facts, a step which he characterized as essential for unifying Albania and eventually for unification of Albania with Europe. Rusi also encouraged Albania to take action on the declaration of the Council of Europe which calls for former Communist nations to condemn and atone for actions of the past.

¶4. (SBU) COMMENT: Though the GOA has promised superficial remedies to the victims of Communism and has agreed, in principle, to paying compensation, it is unlikely the government will have the financial means to make restitution to the full satisfaction of Association members. Moreover, the government is unlikely to engage in the thorough unearthing of facts and data that would be necessary for truly bringing to light the full damage caused by Communism. Such analysis would require an opening of state archives which heretofore have remained sealed and few doubt will ever come to pass given the prominence of many former Communists, including the current PM, throughout the political class. This is not a new issue nor is it likely to be resolved any time soon. END COMMENT
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